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Department of State

INCOMING TELEGRAM

274

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 ADS-00 INR-10 EUR-12 SS-15 OIC-02 CIAE-00
DODE-00 H-01 IO-15 NSCE-00 NSAE-00 SSO-00 HA-06
PM-09 PA-01 SSM-03 INRE-00 SAL-01 ACDA-12 SSN-02
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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
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INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
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AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 03673

E.O.12065: GDS 06/09/87 (SEELYE, TALCOTT W.) OR-M
TAGS: MOPS, PEPR, IS, IZ, SY, US
SUBJECT: SYRIAN COMMENTARY ON ISRAELI AIR ATTACK

1. (C-ENTIRE TEXT)

2. PUBLIC SYRIAN REACTION TO THE ISRAELI AIR STRIKE ON THE OSIRA NUCLEAR REACTOR HAS BEEN PREDICTABLY SHARP WITH THE UNITED STATES COMING IN FOR A SHARE OF THE BLAME BECAUSE OF ITS MILITARY SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP WITH ISRAEL. THE FOREIGN MINISTRY ISSUED A STATEMENT THE EVENING OF JUNE 8 CONDEMNING THE ATTACK, BUT STATING THAT SYRIA WAS NOT SURPRISED SINCE IT HAD GIVEN NUMEROUS WARNINGS ABOUT ISRAELS AGGRESSIVE INTENTIONS. THE STATEMENTS ALSO NOTED THAT ISRAEL HAD USED "THE HELLISH WAR MACHINE SUPPLIED TO IT BY THE US WHICH DOES NOT CARE ABOUT THE WAY ISRAEL IS USING THIS MACHINE IN LAUNCHING AGGRESSION. . ."

3. SYRIAN EDITORIAL COMMENTARY JUNE 9 FOCUSES ON THE ATTACK, AND ESPECIALLY ON THE US CONNECTION. A LENGTHY POLITICAL COMMENTARY IN AL-BAATH CONDEMNED THE EVENT IN TERMS OF "AMERICAN-ISRAELI CONNIVANCE," CLAIMING THAT THE US HAD FOREKNOWLEDGE OF THE ATTACK AND GAVE ISRAEL A GREEN LIGHT. ALTHOUGH THE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE SYRIA TIMES QUOTED THE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMANS COMMENTS AT THE 11:15 PRESS BRIEFING DENYING PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE, THE BAATH CORRESPONDENT WROTE "HOW CAN THE US ALLOW ISRAEL TO CARRY OUT THISAGGRESSION AND THEN CONSIDER IT A GRAVE DEVELOPMENT THAT AROUSES SERIOUS CONCERN?" THE WRITER ACCUSED THE US OF HAVING COLLABORATED WITH ISRAEL IN DEVELOPING ISRAELI NUCLEAR FACILITIES AND SAID THAT WASHINGTON IGNORED "THE DANGER POSED BY ISRAELI ATOMIC BOMBS TO THE ARABS AND THE WORLD."

4. THE AL-BAATH ARTICLE STATED THAT ISRAEL HAD DEMONSTRATED ITS "AGGRESSIVE POLICY AGAINST EVERYTHING THAT ISRAEL VIEWS AS A THREAT TO ITS SECURITY," BE IT THE NUCLEAR, REACTOR, SYRIAN MISSILES IN THE BEKAA OR "ALL THINGS WHICH CONSTITUTE ARAB MIGHT, BE THEY MILITARY, ECONOMIC, OR EVEN DEMOGRAPHIC." HE THEN ASKED "HOW CAN WASHINGTON NOW SAY TO THE ARABS THAT THE PRIORITIES IN THE REGION SHOULD BE REARRANGED IN SUCH A WAY AS TO PLACE WHAT IS CALLED THE SOVIET DANGER AT THE TOP?"

5. COMMENTING ON SYRIAS STRAINED RELATIONS WITH IRAQ, THE AL-BAATH ARTICLE SAID THAT ALTHOUGH SYRIA IS AT ODDS WITH IRAQ, "THIS IS ONE THING AND THE ISRAELI ATTACK IS QUITE ANOTHER." THE ARTICLE SAID SYRIA WILL FIGHT TO PREVENT ISRAELI AGGRESSION ON ANOTHER ARAB STATE, "WHATEVER OUR DIFFERENCES MAY BE."

6. COMMENT [redacted]

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

REVIEWED BY J. Li DATE 9/30/82

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TS AUTH. ____ REASON(S) ____
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